

The Director
Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

6 November 1978

The Editor
THE BALTIMORE SUN
A. S. Abell Company
Calvert & Centre Streets
Baltimore, Maryland 21203

Dear Sir:

On November 1st, Mr. Garry Wills had an article in your paper entitled, "The CIA and the Press." In it he critiqued a speech I had given a few days before at the National Press Club. I am enclosing a copy of that speech since it would appear that Mr. Wills wrote from a second-hand report.

The basic issue is a comparison between the desire of the press to preserve the secrecy of its sources of information and the desire of the CIA to do the same. Mr. Wills states quite blatantly that the CIA wants not only to protect its sources but to hide its wrongdoings. I vehemently deny this, but more importantly I refer Mr. Wills to the portion of my speech on oversight. I clearly pointed out that no matter what motives you impute to myself and others in the leadership of the Central Intelligence Agency, we are today under very rigorous oversight from both the Executive and Legislative Branches of our government. Mr. Wills and any citizen have good assurance from the oversight process that secrecy will not be abused.

Next, Mr. Wills expressly says that I said "...reporters should not print the leaks of wrongdoing in government by whistleblowers." I said nothing of the sort and refer you to the text I have enclosed. I only said that we should be suspect of whistleblowers who don't resort to the established oversight procedures before disclosing government secrets to the press and that the members of the press might do well to be skeptical themselves of many whistleblowers. I have in many public speeches affirmed my conviction that a number of whistleblowers in recent years have provided a great service to our country.

In his final paragraph Mr. Wills states the thesis that protecting sources so that ultimately newsmen will be able to publish more facts is necessarily and always laudable; whereas protecting sources so as not to reveal government secrets is always necessarily bad. This simplistic thesis has no logic to support it, nor would the people of this country support the view that protecting such information as our nation's communication codes, our negotiating positions in matters of trade, tariffs or arms limitation, or any number of other national concerns may not be equally or more important to our national well-being.

I close with the suggestion and hope that should Mr. Wills have any evidence or suspicion of cover-up, wrongdoing or impropriety by me or anyone in the Intelligence Community, that he make those suspicions known to the Intelligence Oversight Board, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. I can assure him that all three bodies will thoroughly investigate any such information he wishes to make available.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stansfield Turner", written in a cursive style.

STANSFIELD TURNER

Enclosure

Address by Admiral Stansfield Turner
Director of Central Intelligence
National Press Club
Washington, D.C.
Wednesday, 25 October 1978

PROTECTING SECRETS IN A FREE SOCIETY